

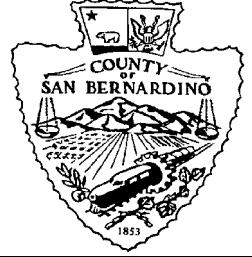
Department of Veterans Affairs

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VA Benefits for Filipino Veterans

Citizens of the Republic of the Philippines who serve today or in the past in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for VA benefits under the same criteria as other U.S. military veterans.

Eligibility for VA benefits for Filipino veterans who served in recognized units of the Philippine Armed Forces – especially during World War II - is not clear-cut.

The Philippine Islands gained their independence from the United States in 1946 following a transition period that was interrupted by World War II. During World War II, Filipinos served in a variety of units, some coming under direct U.S. military control, others having no ties to the U.S. Military, and still others falling somewhere in the middle. Federal law, international treaties and court cases have taken up the question of which VA benefits should be given to various groups of World War II Filipino veterans.

ELIGIBILITY: The United States recognizes service in four groups as qualifying for some VA benefits, but only one group, the Regular Philippine Scouts, qualifies for full benefits.

- Regular, or "Old," Philippine Scouts. Regular Philippine Scouts, or "old scouts," were Filipino Special Forces units of the U.S. Army whose officers were Americans. Originally formed in 1901, long before any formal plan for Philippine independence, the Regular Philippine Scouts were part of the U.S. Army throughout its existence. Their military service is considered active service in the U.S. Armed Forces and, therefore, they are eligible for all VA benefits and services at full benefit rates.
- New Philippine Scouts. New Philippine Scouts were Philippine citizens who served with the U.S. Armed Forces with the consent of the Philippine government and served between Oct. 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947. New Philippine Scouts are entitled to disability compensation at half rates and their survivors are paid dependency and indemnity compensation at half rates, no matter where they reside. New Scouts are also entitled to medical treatment for service-connected disabilities only, on a discretionary basis.
- Guerrilla Service. People in this group, called U.S. Armed Forces of the Far East (USAFFE) guerrillas, served in resistance units recognized by and cooperating with U.S. forces between April 20, 1942, and June 30, 1946. The entitlement of veterans of recognized guerrilla forces who live outside of the United States is limited but includes certain monetary benefits at half the statutory rate, and those who lawfully reside in the United States are entitled to full-rate disability compensation and burial benefits. Veterans are also entitled to burial in a national cemetery, a burial flag, a grave marker or headstone and a burial allowance. Service-disabled veterans may also receive comprehensive health care in the United States. Their survivors are entitled to dependency and indemnity compensation at half the statutory rate.
- Commonwealth Army of the Philippines. Also known as the Philippine Commonwealth Army, its members served on or after July 26, 1941, and before June 30, 1946. The origins of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines are in the early 1900s when the United States assumed formal sovereignty over the Philippines. At that time, the United States was preparing for the Philippines to become a sovereign nation. Public Law 73-127, enacted in 1934, reflects this. It required the Commonwealth Army to respond to the call of the President of the United States under certain conditions. The Commonwealth Army to service on July 26, 1941, and it served with the

USAFFE command throughout World War II. The entitlement of Commonwealth Army veterans who live outside of the United States is limited but includes certain monetary benefits at half the statutory rate, and those who lawfully reside in the United States are entitled to full-rate disability compensation and burial benefits. Veterans are also entitled to burial in a national cemetery, a burial flag, a grave marker or headstone and a burial allowance. Service-disabled veterans may also receive comprehensive health care in the United States. Their survivors are entitled to dependency and indemnity compensation at half the statutory rate.

Health Care and Other Benefits.

VA offers comprehensive hospital and nursing home care and medical services in its U.S. facilities to veterans of the **Commonwealth Army** and the **recognized guerrillas** who are lawfully admitted U.S. residents and receive VA disability compensation.

New Philippine Scouts may receive care only for service-connected conditions and within the limit of VA resources. In the Philippines.

Old Philippine Scouts may receive comprehensive VA care, including care in the Manila VA outpatient clinic. VA makes inpatient care available at Philippine community hospitals under contract. The Republic of the Philippines also provides free hospital care to its war veterans.

History.

Current laws affecting these benefits date to congressional actions in 1946 that specified that the service of groups other than the Old Scouts would not be considered U.S. military service. Congress historically has resisted changing the formula under which responsibility for the welfare of these veterans is shared between the United States and the Philippines.

In 1948, Congress passed a law that authorized VA to build and equip the hospital now called Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC), in Manila, which was turned over to the Philippine government in 1955. The VA outpatient clinic was established three years later.

The U.S. government also gave the Philippine government grants of at least \$500,000 per year for more than 30 years, starting in the 1960s, to help the VMMC upgrade its equipment and physical plant. A VA contract with the VMMC was expanded by legislation in 1963 permitting the center to care for non-service-connected conditions of Filipino and U.S. veterans. But it was not until 1973, however, that legislation permitted the VA itself to provide medical treatment of service-connected conditions (and non-service-connected illnesses in certain conditions) for Philippine Army and New Philippine Scout veterans. In fiscal years 2002 and 2003, VA furnished medical equipment to the VMMC worth a total of nearly \$1 million.

The half rates of compensation to most Filipino veterans living in the Philippines, now in federal law, were intended to reflect that the Philippines had a lower cost of living than the United States. Since World War II, however, many Filipino veterans and their dependents have immigrated to this country.

How Do I Get Help Or More Information?

Veterans Service Representatives are available to discuss this or any veterans' issue with you.

Veterans Service Representatives are available to discuss claims or any veterans' issues with you. Call your closest office for the nearest location to you:

Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Victorville: (760) 843-2790 San Bernardino: (909) 387-5516 Chino: (909) 465-5241

Part time offices in: Barstow, Yucca Valley and 29 Palms.